

Report Tracks High School Grads in College

New reports from the Council on Postsecondary Education offer a detailed picture of how the Class of 2004 is faring in Kentucky's colleges. The new High School Feedback Report includes a separate report for each public and private Kentucky high school.

Among the statewide data, the mean cumulative high school grade-point average for the state's more than 41,000 graduates in 2004 — the grade they earned in high school — was a 2.81 on a four-point scale. Translated into a letter grade, the mean was a B-minus.

Members of the Class of 2004 who went on to Kentucky colleges — just over half of the grads — earned a mean award from the Kentucky Educational Excellence Scholarship fund of \$1,054 per year.

After their first year of college in Kentucky, the Class of 2004 had a mean 2.24 grade-point average in college, a C-plus. About 80 percent of the graduates returned to college for a second year. Only about 60 percent of the students, however, met the requirements to stay eligible for their KEES awards in their second year of college.

Education officials said that the high school reports offer local educators and community members an important view of how well children are prepared for postsecondary programs.

"We hope it stimulates community conversations about the support that school and district leaders need to improve the college participation and success rates of Kentucky's high school graduates," said Kevin Noland, the state's interim education commissioner.

CPE has worked to modify the report since the 2006 version to make it more useful. The report combines information from the Council, the state education department, the Kentucky Higher Education Assistance Authority, ACT Inc., and The College Board.

"It is critical to Kentucky's future economic success that we understand how students are moving through the education pipeline," said Tom Layzell, president of the CPE. "This effort underlines the need for a comprehensive, statewide P-20 data warehouse that would bring together information from all education agencies to create a seamless system of education."

The individual high school reports show school level data compared to district and state figures. The report shows how many students needed remedial courses in college because of low scores in reading or math on the ACT college-entrance exam.

CPE RAISES REMEDIATION CUTOFF

The report found that among the Class of 2004 who went on to college, 33 percent were identified with "developmental needs" in math. In English, 27 percent needed remedial work, while 21 percent

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Six-page data summaries for each high school are available online at www.cpe.ky.gov/news/reports/highschoolfeedback/

needed remedial courses in reading. Students with subject-area subscores below 18 on the ACT are identified for remedial work.

While remediation rates are already high, the CPE in May approved boosting the ACT cut-off for remedial courses in both math and reading starting in the fall of 2009. That year, incoming freshmen will need a 19 in math and a 21 in reading to avoid taking remedial courses, which don't qualify for college credit.

Layzell called the increase "another important step toward upgrading the standards of education in Kentucky." The council projected that the increase in scores is likely to affect 4,000-5,000 students. The agency said that while more students will be identified for remedial courses, the help they will receive increases their chances of staying in college and earning a degree.

The High School Feedback report showed that while overall, the Class of 2004 had a 2.28 grade-point after their first year of college, that broke down to a 2.68 GPA for students who did not need remedial courses and a 1.78 — a D-plus — for students with "developmental needs" in one or more subjects.

New Ky. Test Data Released

The Kentucky legislature's move to expand public school testing by administering a pair of exams produced by ACT Inc., has yielded the first year of results. All 8th and 10th graders took the test for the first time last fall.

The EXPLORE exam is created for eighth graders and measures high school readiness. It tests English, math, reading, and science.

The PLAN exam for 10th graders predicts a student's preparation for the ACT college-entrance exam and covers the same four subjects as EXPLORE.

Kentucky students' scores fell short of the national average on both tests. Kentucky students, however, were closer to the national average on the 8th grade exam than on the 10th grade test. District and school results are online at www.education.ky.gov/KDE/Administrative+Resources/Testing+and+Reporting/Reports/Explore+and+Plan+Data+2006-2007.htm

The PLAN results will factor into schools' CATS school index. The state will study whether to include EXPLORE results. The ACT will be administered statewide for the first time in the fall of 2008.